pathogenic bacteria, they may be used to generate a protective or therapeutic immune response to any pathogen. producing majorly abundant extracellular products.

For purposes of the present invention, the term "majorly abundant" should be understood as a relative term identifying those extracellular products released in the greatest quantity by the pathogen of interest. For example, with respect to *M. tuberculosis* grown under various conditions of culture to an optical density of approximately 0.5, one skilled in the art should expect to obtain on the order of 10 mg/L or more of a majorly abundant extracellular product. Thus, out of the total exemplary 4 mg/L total output of extracellular product for *M. tuberculosis* grown under normal or heat shock conditions, approximately fifteen to twenty (alone or in combination) of the one hundred or so known extracellular products will constitute approximately ninety percent of the total quantity. These are the majorly abundant extracellular products contemplated as being within the scope of the present invention and are readily identifiable as the broad bands appearing in SDS/PAGE gels. In addition, the extracellular products of interest may further be characterized and differentiated by amino acid sequencing. The remaining extracellular products are minor. Those skilled in the art will also appreciate that the relative quantitative abundance of specific major extracellular products may vary depending upon conditions of culture. However, in most cases, the identification of an individual majorly abundant extracellular product will not change.

Accordingly, the present invention may be used to protect a mammalian host against infection by viral, bacterial, fungal or protozoan pathogens. It should be noted that in some cases, such as in viral infections, the majorly abundant extracellular products may be generated by the infected host cell. While active against all microorganisms releasing majorly abundant extracellular

products, the vaccines and methods of the present invention are particularly effective in generating protective immunity against intracellular pathogens, including various species and serogroups of the genus *Mycobacterium*. The vaccines of the present invention are also effective as immunotherapeutic agents for the treatment of existing disease conditions.

Surprisingly, it has been found by this inventor that immunization with the most or majorly abundant products released extracellularly by bacterial pathogens or their immunogenic analogs can provoke an effective immune response irrespective of the absolute immunogenicity of the administered compound. Due to their release from the organism and hence their availability to host molecules involved in antigen processing and presentation and due to their naturally high concentration in tissue during infection, the majorly abundant extracellular products of a pathogenic agent are processed and presented to the host immune system more often than other bacterial components. In the case of intracellular pathogens, the majorly abundant extracellular products are the principal immunogenic determinants presented on the surface of the infected host cells and therefore exhibit a greater presence in the surrounding environment. Accordingly, acquired immunity against the majorly abundant extracellular products of a pathogenic organism allows the host defense system to swiftly detect pathogens sequestered inside host cells and effectively inhibit them.

More particularly, the principal or majorly abundant products released by pathogenic bacteria appear to be processed by phagocytes and other host immune system mechanisms at a greater rate than less prevalent or membrane bound pathogenic components regardless of their respective immunogenic activity or specificity. This immunoprocessing disparity is particularly significant when the pathogenic agent is an intracellular bacteria sequestered from

normal immune activity. By virtue of their profuse and continual presentation to the infected host's immune system, the most prevalent bacterial extracellular products or their immunogenic analogs provoke a vigorous immune response largely irrespective of their individual molecular immunogenic characteristics.

Majorly abundant extracellular products are the principal constituents of proteins and other molecular entities which are released by the target pathogen into the surrounding environment. Current research indicates that in some instances a single majorly abundant extracellular product may comprise up to 40% by weight of the products released by a microorganism. More often, individual majorly abundant extracellular products account for between from about 0.5% to about 25% of the total products released by the infectious pathogen. Moreover, the top five or six majorly abundant extracellular products may be found to comprise between 60% to 70% of the total mass released by a microorganism. Of course those skilled in the art will appreciate that the relative levels of extracellular products may fluctuate over time as can the absolute or relative quantity of products released. For example, pH, oxidants, osmolality, heat and other conditions of stress on the organism, stage of life cycle, reproduction status and the composition of the surrounding environment may alter the composition and quantity of products released. Further, the absolute and relative levels of extracellular products may differ greatly from species to species and even between strains within a species.

In the case of intracellular pathogens extracellular products appear to expand the population of specifically immune lymphocytes capable of detecting and exerting an antimicrobial effect against macrophages containing live bacteria. Further, by virtue of their repeated display on the surface of infected cells, the majorly abundant or principal extracellular products function as effective

antigenic markers. Accordingly, pursuant to the teachings of the present invention, vaccination and the inducement of protective immunity directed to the majorly abundant extracellular products of a pathogenic bacteria or their immunogenically equivalent determinants, prompts the host immune system to mount a rapid and efficient immune response with a strong cell-mediated component when subsequently infected by the target pathogen.

In direct contrast to prior art immunization activities which have primarily been focused on the production of vaccines and the stimulation of immune responses based upon the highly specific molecular antigenicity of individual screened pathogen components, the present invention advantageously exploits the relative abundance of bacterial extracellular products or their immunogenic analogs (rather than their immunogenic specificities) to establish or induce protective immunity with compounds which may actually exhibit lower immunogenic specificity than less prevalent extracellular products. For the purposes of this disclosure an immunogenic analog is any molecule or compound sufficiently analogous to at least one majorly abundant extracellular product expressed by the target pathogen, or any fraction thereof, to have the capacity to stimulate a protective immune response in a vaccinated mammalian host upon subsequent infection by the target pathogen. In short, the vaccines of the present invention are identified or produced by selecting the majorly abundant product or products released extracellularly by a specific pathogen (or molecular analogs capable of stimulating a substantially equivalent immune response) and isolating them in a relatively pure form or subsequently sequencing the DNA or RNA responsible for their production to enable their synthetic or endogenous production. The desired prophylactic immune response to the target pathogen may then be elicited by formulating one or more of the isolated immunoreactive products or the

encoding genetic material using techniques well known in the art and immunizing a mammalian host prior to infection by the target pathogen.

It is anticipated that the present invention will consist of at least one, two or, possibly even several well defined immunogenic determinants. As a result, the present invention produces consistent, standardized vaccines which may be developed, tested and administered with relative ease and speed. Further, the use of a few well defined molecules corresponding to the majorly abundant secretory or extracellular products greatly reduces the risk of adverse side effects associated with conventional vaccines and eliminates the possible occlusion of effective immunogenic markers. Similarly, because the present invention is not an attenuated or a killed vaccine the risk of infection during production, purification or upon administration is effectively eliminated. As such, the vaccines of the present invention may be administered safely to immunocompromised individuals, including asymptomatic tuberculosis patients and those infected with HIV. Moreover, as the humoral immune response is directed exclusively to products released by the target pathogen, there is little chance of generating a detrimental opsonic immune component. Accordingly, the present invention allows the stimulated humoral response to assist in the elimination of the target pathogen from antibody susceptible areas.

Another beneficial aspect of the present invention is the ease by which the vaccines may be harvested or produced and subsequently purified and sequenced. For example, the predominantly abundant extracellular products may be obtained from cultures of the target pathogen, including *M. tuberculosis* or *M. bovis*, with little effort. As the desired compounds are released into the media during growth, they can readily be separated from the intrabacterial and membrane-bound components of the target

extracellular products provided immunoprophylaxis when tested, thereby demonstrating the scope of the present invention and broad range of vaccines which may be formulated in accordance with the teachings thereof.

However, it should be emphasized that the present invention is not restricted to combinations of secretory or extracellular products. For example, several alternative experimental protocols demonstrate the capacity of a single abundant extracellular product to induce mammalian protective immunity in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. In each experiment guinea pigs were immunized with a single majorly abundant extracellular product purified from *M. tuberculosis* EP using the chromatography protocols detailed herein. In one example the animals were vaccinated in multiple experiments with an adjuvant composition containing a purified abundant secretory product having a molecular weight corresponding to 30 KD. In another example of the present invention, different guinea pigs were vaccinated with an adjuvant composition containing an abundant extracellular product isolated from *M. tuberculosis* having a molecular weight corresponding to 71 KD. Following their respective immunizations both sets of animals and the appropriate controls were exposed to lethal doses of aerosolized *M. tuberculosis* to determine vaccine effectiveness.

More particularly, in one experiment six guinea pigs were immunized with 100 μg of 30 KD protein in SAF on three occasions spread over a period of six weeks. Control animals were simultaneously vaccinated with corresponding amounts of a bulk preparation of extracellular proteins (EP) or buffer. Three weeks after the final vaccination, the animals were challenged with an aerosolized lethal dose of *M. tuberculosis* and monitored for a period of 14 weeks. The 30 KD immunized guinea pigs and those immunized with the bulk extracellular preparation had survival rates of 67% and 50% respectively (illustrat-

Alternatively, genetic material encoding the genes for one or more of the immunogenic determinants derived from the majorly abundant pathogenic extracellular products may be coupled with eucaryotic promoter and/or secretion sequences and injected directly into a mammalian host to induce endogenous expression of the immunogenic determinants and subsequent protective immunity.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from a consideration of the following detailed description of preferred exemplary embodiments thereof taken in conjunction with the figures which will first be described briefly.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a representation of 4 coomassie blue stained gels, labeled 1a to 1d, illustrating the purification of exemplary majorly abundant extracellular products of *M. tuberculosis* as identified by sodium deodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE).

Fig. 2 is a tabular representation identifying the five N-terminal amino acids of fourteen exemplary majorly abundant extracellular products of *M. tuberculosis* (Sequence ID Nos. 1-14) and the apparent molecular weight for such products.

Fig. 3 is a tabular representation of the extended N-terminal amino acid sequence of three exemplary majorly abundant secretory products of *M. tuberculosis* (Sequence ID Nos. 15-17) which were not distinguished by the five N-terminal amino acids shown in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a graphical comparison of the survival rate of guinea pigs immunized with exemplary purified majorly abundant 30 KD secretory product of *M. tuberculosis* versus positive controls immunized with a prior art bulk preparation of extracellular proteins and nonimmunized negative